Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-21(canceled, without prejudice).

Claim 22 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, ~~the method~~ comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, a call ~~an information stream including encoded voice band traffic originating~~ originated from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network, the voice terminal being communicably connected to the gateway for communication to the gateway of the call, the call comprising a call initiation information and the call initiation information comprising a call destination identifier originated from the voice terminal;

packetizing the call initiation information at the gateway;

directing the ~~information stream~~ packetized call initiation information over the packet–switched network to ~~an~~ a centralized authentication service connected to the gateway by the packet-switched network, and thereby establishing a communicable connection between the gateway ~~voice terminal~~ and the authentication service via the packet-switched network;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the communicable connection of the packet-switched network between the gateway and the authentication service ~~information stream from the authentication service,~~;

re-directing the communicable connection ~~between the gateway and the authentication service on information stream via the packet-switched network~~ to establish a communicable connection, on the packet-switched network, between the gateway and ~~with~~ a target device; and

wherein the ~~directing~~ re-directing is based, at least in part, on the packetized call initiation information ~~first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating~~ that corresponds to the call initiation information, including the call destination identifier, from the voice terminal to the gateway.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream including encoded voice-band traffic ~~originating from a voice terminal outside the packet-switched network~~, the information stream comprising a destination identifier;

directing the information stream over the packet–switched network to an authentication service ~~and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service~~;

authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the information stream from the authentication service~~;~~

~~,~~–re-directing a next ~~the~~ information stream including encoded voice-band traffic via the packet-switched network to establish a connection with a target device, the re-directing being based, at least in part, on the destination identifier; and

~~authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;~~

receiving at the target device the next information stream via the packet-switched network

~~wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal;~~

~~wherein a second destination identifier is supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating; and~~

~~wherein the second destination identifier is selective fore the target device~~.

Claim 24 (currently amended): A method of operating voice traffic bearing packet switched network, ~~the method~~ comprising the steps of:

receiving at a gateway to the packet-switched network, an information stream ~~including~~ representable by encoded voice-band traffic, the information stream originating from a voice terminal communicably connected to the gateway ~~outside the packet-switched network~~ and the information stream comprising an identifier of a second voice terminal;

directing an encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the information stream, over the packet–switched network to an authentication service ~~and thereby establishing a connection between the voice terminal and the authentication service~~;

authenticating the voice terminal via the encoded voice-band traffic;

upon authentication by the authentication service, dissociating the communicative connection over the packet-switched network between ~~information stream from~~ the authentication service and the gateway~~;~~ ;

next directing at least a portion of the encoded voice-band traffic ~~re-directing the information stream via~~ over the packet-switched network to ~~establish a connection with~~ a target device, as so dissociated from the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway;

further receiving at the gateway a next information stream representable by next encoded voice-band traffic, the next information stream originating from the voice terminal communicably connected to the gateway;

next directing at least a portion of a next encoded voice-band traffic, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream, over the packet-switched network to the target device, as so dissociated from the communicative connection between the authentication service and the gateway;

receiving at least a portion of the next information stream at the second voice terminal communicably connected to the target device, the second voice terminal for the receipt is dictated based on the identifier

~~authenticating a credential associated with the information stream using the authentication service;~~

~~wherein the directing is based, at least in part, on first destination identifier supplied with the encoded voice-band traffic originating from the voice terminal;~~

~~wherein the first destination identifier includes a phone number corresponding to the authentication service; and~~

~~wherein a second destination identifier selective for the target device is supplied from the voice terminal coincident with the authenticating~~.

Claims 25-28 (canceled, without prejudice).

Claim 29 (new): The method of claim 22, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of a destination device.

Claim 30 (new): The method of claim 29, wherein the telephone number is a PSTN call

number and the destination device is a second voice terminal.

Claim 31 (new): The method of claim 22, wherein the target device is a second gateway, communicably connected to a second voice terminal.

Claim 32 (new): The method of claim 31, wherein the call initiation information comprises a telephone number of the second voice terminal and the second voice terminal is communicably connected outside the packet-switched network to the second gateway.

Claim 33 (new): The method of claim 23, wherein the next information stream includes the destination identifier.

Claim 34 (new): The method of claim 33, further comprising the step of:

communicably connecting a recipient voice terminal to the target device, based on the destination identifier.

Claim 35 (new): The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of:

receiving a voice message at the recipient voice terminal, corresponding to at least a portion of the next information stream.